

munities in seeking these funds. In addition, the Department should develop systems to maximize federal funds to reimburse providers and agencies for interpreter services. The NC General Assembly should appropriate funding to the NC Department of Health and Human Services to assist in recruiting bilingual and, if available, bicultural professionals and pay for interpreter services.

2. The NC General Assembly appropriate additional funds to the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (OMHHD) to expand the capacity of OMHHD to focus on Latino health issues. Specifically, the OMHHD should: expand its technical assistance; communicate with communities about funding opportunities; provide cultural diversity and interpreter training to local agencies, non-profits and community groups; and conduct research into the major health issues facing Latinos.
  - As part of this effort, the OMHHD Hispanic Health Task Force should be expanded to include a broader collaboration of state agencies and other organizations to develop policies and programs to address the health care needs of Latinos. The collaboration should help support the development or expansion of local coalitions to address the health needs of Latinos.
  - If no new funds are immediately available, the Department of Health and Human Services should explore state, federal and private grant sources to obtain additional revenues to support the work of OMHHD.
3. The Governor's Office and NC Department of Health and Human Services explore the issues around certification, credentialing and licensing of foreign graduates, and research what other states are doing to develop systems to enhance recruitment of bilingual and bicultural health, behavioral health and human services providers.
  - Because of the immediate need for bilingual and bicultural mental health and substance abuse counselors, the NC Department of Health and Human Services should work with the NC Social Work licensure board, the NC Certification Board for Substance Abuse Counselors and the Office of State Personnel to facilitate the certification, credentialing, licensure and employment of bilingual and bicultural social workers and substance abuse counselors.
  - The General Assembly should appropriate funds to the University and Community College system to provide course work tailored to foreign graduates to assist them in preparing for certification, credentialing, and licensure in social work, substance abuse, nursing and other allied health and human services professions to increase the recruitment of bilingual, bicultural providers.
4. The NC General Assembly appropriate funding to maintain and expand the AHEC Spanish Language and Cultural Training Initiative and the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities interpreter training and cultural diversity training courses.